



THE ROCKEFELLER UNIVERSITY

1230 YORK AVENUE

NEW YORK, NY 10021

June 26, 1979

JOSHUA LEDERBERG

PRESIDENT

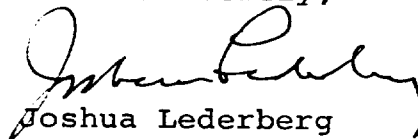
Dr. A. Bruce Bishop  
Executive Director  
New York State  
Energy Research and Development Authority  
Rockefeller Plaza  
Albany, New York 12223

Dear Dr. Bishop:

This is to respond to your letter of June 19th requesting information on coal research programs at the University. The Rockefeller University is pre-eminently a biomedical research institute and we do not have any programs here that might at first order comply with the expressed interests in "a strong technology base for coal conversion". For that reason, I have not attempted to respond further to the questionnaire -- which as you know itself must entail some consumption of scarce resources.

On further reflection, however, it seemed to me that there might be some lesson in the non-congruence behind our response. Insufficient attention to the health and other environmental consequences of energy production, by other routes, has had the gravest political and economic consequences already. I hope we will not face the same sorry history in the exploitation of coal; but this is quite likely to happen if we do not pursue, much more aggressively, the potential health hazards of various forms of carbon and particularly of polyaromatic components that dominate most schemes of coal liquefaction. In your further discussion of the development of a university coal laboratory program I hope you will be giving more than perfunctory attention to the research base needed to validate the health effects of coal conversion, and by the health policy standards of 1990 rather than 1950.

Yours sincerely,

  
Joshua Lederberg

enc: ~~enclosure~~

bcc: Rex